

The Department of Film & Video at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
Presents

# Nomads and Homesteaders: Trespassing the Boundaries of Media Exhibition

March 31! April 1, 2001

Imagine films happening on every street corner, projected from skyscrapers, on rivers, from the backs of trucks, on the underbelly of clouds, or peeking out from alleyways - visual magic enveloping the city. Micro-cinemas, multi-screen rave exhibitions, niche festivals, activist media clearinghouses and web screenings - film, video, sound installation, pirate radio and digital hybrids - the world of media is rapidly pushing at the seams of yesterday's well worn shirt. Emerging are a myriad of new strategies for media programming and viewing that are challenging more traditional venues to follow suit.

In response to a decade of arts de-funding, urban gentrification, the wider availability of technical resources such as digital video, mini projectors, the web and a healthy desire to shake things up, media makers have taken a leading role curating and exhibiting their own work redefining the landscape of media habitation as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The homesteader and nomad circle each other. As artists we are bound to our homes, streets, cities, and nations, yet we are pioneers, immigrants, exiles and explorers. The question of settling versus wandering sits deep within our psyche as we forge our paths and try to speak through our work. What does it all mean for media arts, and the makers and curators who traverse these spaces. Does the lore of the local still hold power? Is it possible to sustain an audience without a home? How does programming change as the habitats for screening change? Can screening in a museum still be radical aesthetically, and are roving micro-cinemas exempt from the critical eye? This symposium explores the dynamism of this continually shifting relationship and the people who drive it.

Organized by graduate students from the SAIC Film/Video and Exhibition Studies programs, this two-day symposium of screenings, panels and site-specific events will bring together a range of Artists/Curators to explore this new landscape. The panels will be broken into two sections; **Nomads: Trespassing Boundaries** and **Homesteaders: Sheltering Skies**. From different perspectives these panels will address questions of the role of maker (individual and collective) as curator, questions of audience, niche programming, building/sustaining an audience, the role of site shifting geographically vs. shifting conceptually, site-specific work, electronic interactivity, the state of funding/defunding, accommodating new media in traditional media spaces, trends, and innovation.

The symposium will be book-ended by two curated programs representing two nomad and homesteader strategies: Ariella Ben-Dov will present a thematic series from the innovative MadCat Women International film and Video Festival, which screens annually at different venues all over the country. Brian Frye who started the Robert Beck Memorial Cinema will screen work from his "micro-cinema a weekly local artist run screening room on the Lower Eastside of New York City.

Nomads and Homesteaders will also be curating a site-specific art event to take place in public spaces around Chicago during the 29th and 30th of March to generate enthusiasm and put into practice of some of the ideas discussed throughout the symposium.

**Invited Panelists Include:**

Ariella Ben-Dov , (MadCat Women's Film and Video Festival)  
Brian Frye (Robert Beck Memorial Cinema)  
Rob Ray, (Dead Tech)  
Lool Cuab , (Peoples Republic for Delicious Foods)  
Paul Chan, (Independent Media Center)  
Miranda July, Big Miss Moviola, Joanie 4 Jackie (Portland)  
James Rondeau , (Museum of the Art Institute of Chicago)  
Hamza Walker, (The Renaissance Society, The University of Chicago)  
Sabrina Craig (Women in the Directors Chair)

**Student Organizers:**

Holen Kahn, Dept. Film/Video  
Stephanie Rothenberg Dept. Film/Video  
Melissa Urcan, Exhibition Studies  
Regan L.Grusy, Exhibition Studies  
Mery Palarea, Exhibition Studies

**Faculty Coordinator:**

Jeffrey Skoller, Assist. Professor Dept. Film/Video  
In cooperation with the Dept. of Arts Administration and Exhibition Studies